1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p. 148b]

THE PASTORELA

535 The *pastorela*, or dance of the shepherds, is
796 also performed at Christmas time. The dance
is particularly connected with the *cabildo* and
with the *prioste*. The leaders in the dance are
857 the *uanánčes*, the four girls (six according to
other accounts) who have taken incense and
flowers to the church during the year and performed other services at the church. Generally they are about 10 years of age. Usually the girls have been vowed to the service by their parents as the result of illness or some other misfortune threatening the child. The time of the dance is sometimes called the fiesta of pajáču (meaning not secured).

The *uanánčes* invite a number of other girls to participate, 12 in all being needed. The girls invited by the *uanánčes* have no responsibilities other than dancing, but each of the *uanánčes* must feed the group for 1 day. The *uanánčes* also select adults to represent the parts of the devil and the hermit and also select the teacher. The girls (all the expenses, of course, are borne by their parents) also have music to accompany the dance.

For the dance the girls are dressed in the *catrin*, i.e. "citified," style, in white dresses with straw hats adorned with artificial flowers (actually the style is not citified, but is rural Mestizo). Owing to the quarrel between the priest and the *cabildo*, the *pastorela* was not performed in 1940 and the actual dance could not be observed. A *relato* (in this case known as the *coloquio*) is an important part of the performance. One of the songs collected (for
535 the *pastorela* of Cheranástico) is as follows
539 (spelling as given):
796

A que noche tan cremoza
Ensillad mi buen caballo
Que en Belen nos conbida de Salvador
Muy lejos tieras bengo
Agosar de una pasiada
Con gusta y contento
A juntar mi ganadito.

TRANSLATION

Ah, what a beautiful night.
Saddle my good horse,
For to Bethlehem the Savior invites us.
To very distant lands I will arrive.
I will enjoy a journey,
With pleasure and content
To bring together my cattle.

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.154a] Sierra Tarascans

535 7% with the peso. From the plaza we then went west over to the store of Don Emilio Rojas where we danced and were given a 50-centavo piece. From there we then came over to the house of Rafael Castillo, where we danced and were given two packages of cigarettes. From there we went over to the store of Benito Pahuamba, where we danced and were given a bottle of sherry. From there we went over to the *carguero's* house to eat supper, but before we ate we danced the whole works. Then we ate supper and after that they gave each of the *viejos* a loaf of white bread. But before, when we were dancing and reciting, the *carguero's* wife began to pass out sugarcane and oranges and then we went to eat. After supper we danced for a little while, up to about 11 p. m., and then we went home. We danced [this time] because that was the *combate* for this year's *mayordomía* for Don Aurelio. [The last sentence is obscure. Don Aurelio was the *carguero* for the succeeding year.]

Ordinarily the dancers appear again for 1 day at the time of Candelaria, February 2, reciting the same *relatos* but without the Three Kings. For 1941 one man had agreed to pay for the music and two others had agreed to provide food for the dancers, but for some reason the arrangement fell through. On the vespers of Candelaria, people burn pitch pine (ocote) in front of their lots.

OTHER DANCES

●[857] On January 1 a group of children, 6 to 8 years old, dances in the day time. Six boys and six girls participate and are called taré sapíratiča, or the "little old men." They go to church very early in the morning and change the image of the Holy Child, which had been placed in a reclining position in a crib on December 25, placing it in a sitting position. After the Mass the children go to the house of the *colector*, where they breakfast and dance. They then go to the house of the kę́i and dance. Later they go to some other houses to dance. At midday they eat at the house of the *colector* again. The dance is performed to music furnished by wind instruments. It apparently attracts little attention and often is not performed. A former *colector* stated the girls are the *uanánčes* for the ensuing year, but this fact seemed not to be generally known.

In connection with the *mayordomía* of Santa Nieves or the Virgin of the Snows, a group of girls performs a dance on August 5 for 1 day to music of wind instruments. The dance is

854 crossing on the chest and being either tied or tucked under the opposite arms. When a little older the child kneels on the top of the *rollo* or thick pleats at the top of the skirt or sits on the *rollo* with legs on either side of the mother's waist. In either case the child is held in place by the *rebozo*. Men often carry infants in their
857 arms, while small girls frequently carry their
854 younger brothers and sisters in the same way as their mothers. The infants seem to interfere with the older child's activities very little.

Occasionally a boy will be seen carrying an infant in a *rebozo*. While this is not common, the boys seemed entirely unself-conscious and were not teased at all. Almost never is an infant put down until it is able to walk. As indicated above, it sleeps with the mother and is permitted to nurse at any time, often sleeping at the breast.

862 Children are not weaned until 18 to 24 months; rare cases are reported of children nursing to the age of 3 or 4. Weaning is aided by anointing the nipple with some bitter or piquant material, for example, chile. Weaning is done because of belief the child needs to have better nourishment, not because of boredom or feeling that the mother may suffer from prolonged nursing. Solid food is given the infant
853 as early as 3 or 4 months, when a little fruit may be offered, such as banana. Tortillas are not given until 8 months. Milk, soup, and mild foods are first given the child. Cooked vegetables are fed at about 3 or 4 years. Chile is not fed children until they are well-grown, or adult, according to one informant.

854 Although children are rarely put down, after they are several months old they may occasionally be placed on the ground and permitted to crawl for brief periods. Occasionally children walk on all fours rather than on their knees. They are not permitted to try to walk,
[856] even though they wish to, until they are judged old enough to do so without causing curvature of the legs.

868 When children are permitted to attempt walking, a wooden bar is hung from two ropes, which in turn fasten to a single rope suspended from a tree or beam. The child is stood up and persuaded to hold the bar, which moves and forces the child to walk. Some children walk

854 [152] forebearance than seems likely to be usual. Possibly her behavior was inhibited by awareness that I was watching.

861 [524] In another instance, a group of small boys were playing marbles. The mother of one of them, a boy probably not over 7, came up behind him, kicked him rather smartly, and scolded him shrewishly for crawling around on his knees and destroying his trousers. The boy was obviously furious but made no reply; when his mother was out of sight he resumed his game—and the crawling. The opportunities for observation of the treatment of small children were far too few to be certain the foregoing cases are typical.

Other situations are handled without stress. [864] Masturbation by small boys is simply ignored by everyone even though it be in public. There seem to be no efforts to inculcate fears in the children or to control them by fear. Children showed some curiosity but certainly no fear of members of the staff. In one instance a mother trying to get a small boy to come to her remarked that I might carry him off. He looked me over calmly and was sufficiently perturbed to make a start in his mother's direction, but he certainly did not take the possibility very seriously. It may be of significance that the mother spoke to the small boy in Spanish.

736 [195] Being an orphan is regarded as a grave misfortune, even though a child may be helped by its godfather. A child whose father has left the mother or died is also spoken of as an orphan. A common figure of speech in Cherán when a person wishes to emphasize how he has had to struggle is to compare himself to an orphan or to say his parents were so indifferent that he felt himself an orphan.

857 871 [562] About 25 percent of the boys go to school at ages between 6 and 8. None of the girls are ever sent to school. Generally by 5 or 6 there is some start toward participation in adult activities. Boys may be sent on errands, while girls begin to play at adult activities.

868 857 Actual participation in adult work begins at about 8 years for boys. At this age they accompany their fathers to the woods and help carry back firewood. In the fields they may do no more than guard the father's blanket, but they are given a sense of participation. They may also help drive animals or care for them. By

[p.174]

868 10 they may guide the plow and do other field
work, for short times. By as early an age as
857 15, boys may be working for wages. When a
boy begins to accompany his father and to aid
in his work, he no longer plays with girls.
There seems no rule about this, but about this
time, when a boy is not working, he goes into
the streets and plays with other boys of his
own age, while the girl no longer plays outside
but always stays near her mother unless sent
on an errand. On rare occasions, if a child is
[861] disobedient, he may be struck once or twice
with a rope or switch.

At a little more than 6 or 7 a girl may be carrying about a younger child and caring for it much of the time. Soon after this she begins to grind on the metate, not as a help, but simply to learn how. The mother also gets a small water jar, and at an early age the girl accompanies her mother to get water. Girls observe the mother in the kitchen and gradually begin to take part in the activities. By the age of 8 a girl may be going alone to the mill with maize. If disobedient, girls may be punished in the same way as boys. In general, it is the opinion in Cherán, and this was borne out by all observations, there is very little disobedience or
[873] punishment at this time and the relations between father and son and mother and daughter are close and affectionate once the child begins active participation in the adult activities. The period of conflict, then, seems a rather limited one, between the time when a child is no longer carried about and the time when it begins to participate in the adult life. These remarks again are based on very inadequate data and observation.

Some time between the ages of 6 and 10,
852 usually toward the upper limits of the age
869 period, the child is usually confirmed. There
is very little ceremony involved, but when a
608 visit from the Bishop is expected there will be
a period of some weeks beforehand when children will be instructed and adults will confess so they may receive communion. For the event a new pair of godparents is sought. These godparents in theory assume the same responsibility as do the godparents of baptism. Actually the bonds seem to be much less close and the duties much less.

857 524 Boys and girls play together a good deal until aged 8 or 10. Varieties of tag games are common. Boys also play among themselves frequently. For small boys at present, small home-made wagons with four wheels, usually with no method of steering, are one of the more popular playthings. Older males in the household make the wagons. Balls made of rags are also used. They are thrown and, at times, are used with a hockeylike game in which the ball is hit with curved wooden sticks. The street is used as a field and the object is to hit the ball past opponents (Beals and Carrasco, 1944). January is a favorite time for this game. Small boys amuse themselves by roping pigs, and about the time of the fiesta of the patron saint they may attempt to ride the pigs.

The most popular boys' game probably is marbles. The common marble game is "follow the leader." It is sometimes played for centavos. The rainy season is the most popular time, because the rain lays the dust and provides clean, hard surfaces. Quite popular is top spinning, which is most played in June and July. Top fighting is a common form. The first player throws his top at a ring. If he misses, his opponent attempts to hit the top with his own. He may split the first top, for the points are sharpened, or win it.

857 481 Stilts are made, especially in October and November. They are small, peeled pine trees with one of the branches left projecting near the bottom. This is almost exclusively a boy's amusement, but one girl was seen walking on stilts. Hunting birds with sling shots (mostly [227] of the rubber-band type) is most common in May and June. A ring and pin game, made of [524] wood in Paracho, is played by all ages.

857 524 A favorite sport from March through May is kite flying. Kites of small boys are about 7 by 9 inches; those of larger boys are about 2 by 3 feet. They are six-stick kites made with sticks all the same length and requiring a tail. They are commonly in bright colors. Big boys tie razor blades on the tails of their kites and fight each other. They try to maneuver their kites into the top position where they can be dropped and cut the strings of the other kites. There is a slight element of danger in this; one boy got his cheek laid open in 1940.

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[p.115]

857 Small girls and sometimes small boys play with swings in the house yards. These are merely larger versions of the swings used to teach infants to walk. Girls also play running games in the streets with small boys and play "keep away" and other games with rag balls. [157] Girls are shy and always stopped playing when they were observed.

857 868 In general, girls ape adult activities much more than do boys. Girls pretend to mill maize, using a board for a metate, a rock for the mano, and mud for the maize dough. They play at being street vendors, using flower petals for merchandise. Sometimes they have dolls made of rags, but not very often. More common is it for several girls to get some boards or branches and make a house in which they will play at housekeeping with their fireplaces, grinding stones, dishes, etc. After several weddings had been held in close succession, a group of girls were observed playing at having a wedding. Flowers were put in the hair of the "godmothers" and leaves of maize were tied in the hair to represent the ribbons used in real weddings.

857 961 Education for life in Cherán is completely on an informal and unconscious level. Children learn first by imitating and then by doing while assisting their parents. The social and religious structure they learn little by little through observation first of parents', and later of relatives', reactions to various individuals and situations and by listening to conversations. Only to a very small extent do children learn by being told. Again, observations are too few to generalize extensively, but apparently children are counseled and advised only when they begin to be old enough to undertake adult responsibilities. When they mention that they may do a certain act, the parents may discuss the advisability with them. In small matters of etiquette, parents may prompt children of any age. Formal training, though, seems to play little part in education for life as it is lived in Cherán.

871 Formal education for about 25 percent of the boys is received in school. Those who continue throughout the available course receive four years of school education. They learn to read and write and do a little simple arithmetic. They learn very little history or geography.